

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed project in coastal waters off Virginia.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

September 11, 2012 to October 9, 2012

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing a proposed federal action to determine if it is consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCP) established pursuant to the U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act. The VCP seeks to protect the quality of air, water or other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT :

DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to re-open a portion of the Georges Bank Closed Area. The Georges Bank (GB) Closed Area has been closed to surfclam/ocean quahog (SC/OQ) harvesting since 1990 due to red tide blooms which cause paralytic shellfish poison (PSP). Red tide blooms, a form of harmful algal bloom, can produce toxins that accumulate in water column filter-feeding shellfish. Shellfish contaminated with the saxitoxin, if eaten in large enough quantity, can cause illness or death in humans from PSP. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has developed at-sea and shore-based testing procedures to verify that SC/OQ harvests taken from GB are safe. Accordingly, the FDA will request that portions of the existing GB Closed Area be opened and closed to SC/OQ harvesting based upon future PSP-toxin monitoring results of SC/OQ. The NMFS has submitted a Federal Consistency Determination that finds the proposed action consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program.

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

NAME; John E. Fisher
DEQ Central Office
Office of Environmental Impact Review
629 East Main Street, Room 633
Richmond, Virginia, 23219;

Phone: (804) 698-4339
Fax: (804) 698-4319
E-mail: john.fisher@deq.virginia.gov